

### Notes on Lanoline in Powder Form.

BY J. A. MARTIN, DENVER—READ AT A MEETING OF THE DENVER PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

IN reply to the query of this association, I to-night present my report on lanoline powder, a preparation used as a dusting or sprinkling powder in various affections of the skin.

The practicability of preparing a powder from lanoline would on first consideration seem doubtful, but the subject has already received some attention.

According to Quaglio, (*Nat. Drug.*, Vol. XVII., p. 4.) lanoline powder is prepared by forming a solution of lanoline with ether or chloroform, mixing the solution with carbonate of magnesia and drying by evaporation at the ordinary temperature; the product is then finely powdered and mixed with an equal weight of powdered starch. If required, the starch can be replaced by oxide of zinc, subnitrate of bismuth or powdered tale.

In the process of manufacture a large amount of water is incorporated with lanoline, varying from 23 to 28 per cent. Now to obtain a product of uniform quality, it is, of course, necessary to get rid of this combined water. Melting at ordinary temperature will not separate it; heated to 230° F. in an evaporating dish, and kept at this temperature for half an hour, failed to expel the water entirely, and fused chloride of calcium was used to remove all traces of water. Prolonged exposure to a high temperature will cause discoloration and develop a disagreeable odor. This method, therefore, of rendering the lanoline anhydrous cannot be recommended. A more satisfactory dry lanoline is obtained by mixing melted lanoline with an equal weight of chloroform or ether, setting the mixture aside until two distinct layers have formed; in the former the water rises to the top, and in the latter it sinks to the bottom. The water can now readily be removed by means of a separating funnel, or in the chloroform mixture with a syphon. In this manner also, the percentage of water present can be easily calculated by ascertaining the weight of residue after evaporating the ether or chloroform. The three specimens on the table labelled anhydrous lanoline, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 were prepared by the three respective methods mentioned.

With an anhydrous lanoline the lanoline powder can now easily be prepared of uniform composition. Dehydrated lanoline is dissolved in two parts of ether, the solution rubbed up with sufficient carbonate of magnesia to equal three times the weight of dry lanoline used, exposed to the ordinary temperature until no traces of ether remain and reduced to fine powder. We thus obtain a dry powder containing 25 per cent. of dehydrated lanoline. Of course, any desirable addition can be made and the percentage of lanoline reduced. The specimens on the tables will show powders of different combinations, containing varying amounts of dry

lanoline. The one in bottle labeled Lanoline Dusting Powder E. D. is made according to E. Dieterich's formula, published in the *Amer. Journ. of Pharmacy*, 1890, p. 248, from *Pharm Centralhalle*, 1890, p. 158:

"5.0 anhydrous lanoline are dissolved in 20.0 ether and rubbed up with 45.0 wheat starch, by exposure the ether is allowed to evaporate; .20 powdered boric acid and 50.0 powdered tale are mixed with the lanoline starch powder and flavored by the addition of one drop each oil wintergreen and oleo-balsamic mixture."

The percentage of lanoline in this preparation is less than 5 per cent., and certainly small to deserve the name *lanoline powder*. You will observe the powder has the appearance of having been wetted or dampened and not at all suitable for a dusting powder. This is owing to the absence of a proper absorbing material. The use of carbonate of magnesia before mixing the lanoline with powdered starch, as recommended by Quaglio, must be considered an improvement, as it permits the admixture of a larger amount of dry lanoline.

As shown by the specimen on the table, as much as 33 per cent. of dry lanoline can be incorporated with carbonate of magnesia, the mixture still retaining the powder form.—*Rocky Mountain Druggist*.

### Prescription Scales.

All prescription departments should be furnished with at least two pairs of prescription scales, one to be kept for weighing small quantities (never over twenty grains), and the other for larger quantities up to the half-ounce.

By keeping a scale for small quantities, its delicacy will be retained for a very much longer time than if used for all weights, heavy and light.

In too many pharmacies can be seen prescription scales that will not turn for a quarter of a grain; this is due to dull bearing points, too large a weight having been used on some occasion, or to rust or dirt being allowed to collect on them.

The prescription scale should be cleaned with water, and if care is exercised nothing else is needed. They should always be enclosed in a case, protected from the air and dust. Always see that your scales balance before attempting to weigh.

It is well to place pieces of paper of even weight on the pans, for by this means you avoid the danger of soiling the latter, and the substance weighed can be at once carried to where you wish to deposit it.

Keep the case door closed when the scale is not in use; put away the weights after using them; and when handling weights, use a little pair of nippers.

One thing, often neglected, is keeping the drawer containing the weights closed, especially when conveying anything on a spatula from a bottle to the scale pan; it is a very common, disagreeable sight to find this drawer full of all sorts of drugs that have dropped in at different times to destroy the accuracy of weights lying in the dirt.—*Bulletin of Pharmacy*.

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